(iii) Training to railway staff is provided immediately after their recruitment and thereafter their knowledge is refreshed periodically. Seminars/workshops/field demonstrations are also organized for Permanent Way staff from time to time to enhance/update their knowledge.

(iv) Patrolling of Railway track by gangmen is carried out at vulnerable locations during monsoon, summer and winter.

(v) The specifications of rail steel have been upgraded and are in conformity with the International Union of Railways (UIC) specifications.

(vi) Ultrasonic Flaw Detectors are used to detect hidden flaws in the rail.

(vii) Mechanized maintenance of track is being introduced progressively, for better and improved maintenance.

(viii) The track structure is being upgraded on a planned basis.

(ix) To keep the track in good condition, track renewals are carried out whenever it becomes due for renewal subject to availability of funds.

Booking of materials on ticket

417. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that booking of materials on ticket has been closed by the Parcel Department of Indian Railways;

(b) if so, the reasons for this closure;

(c) whether it is also a fact that many a times, luggage bogies go without luggage due to which the Ministry faces financial losses; and

(d) whether he has directed the concerned for starting booking of materials on ticket also?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELLU): (a) Commercial items are not permitted to be booked on luggage

ticket. They can be booked as parcels and carried in the brake van of passenger trains.

(b) In case booking of commercial items on luggage ticket is permitted, the consignor may avail of the facility of free allowance which will lead to loss of revenue to Railways. In addition to this, congestion of commercial items would also result in railway being unable to transport passengers' luggage by the same train by which they themselves are travelling, resulting in passenger complaints.

(c) Yes, Sir. There are instances where all luggage compartments in a train do not go fully utilized due to no demand for either luggage or parcel.

(d) No, Sir.

Harassment of passengers by ticket checkers

418. SHRI FAQIR CHAND MULLANA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that the ticket checking officials are harassing the genuine reserved passengers on the pretext of luggage checking in the trains;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of such complaints received by Government during the period from July 2005 till date, particularly in train No. 2626, Kerala Express; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the action taken against the guilty ticket checkers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI *R.* VELLU): (a) to (d) No complaints have been received against ticket checking staff particularly in train No. 2626, Kerala Express for harassment on the pretext of luggage checking during July, 2005 till date, however, one complaint has been received on train No. 1082 Mumbai-Kanyakumari Express of 18.08.2005 wherein the passenger disputed the correctness of weighment of the luggage by the Travelling Ticket Examiner of the train. Necessary action will be taken against the staff, if found guilty.